Examiner's Amendment

1.   An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Patrick Muffo on 11/04/2009.

Claims 1, 2, 4-17, 20, and 21 are being replaced with the following:

1. An image generating method performed by an apparatus including a processor, the apparatus connected to an input system, the input system including a tablet using an electromagnetic induction method; and a formed object incorporating a coil for performing predetermined communication using an electro magnetic induction method when placed on the tablet, and a memory for storing identification information on the formed object, so that, when the formed object is placed on the tablet, the apparatus obtains from the input system a placed position and direction on the tablet, and identification information on the formed object, the method comprising:

detecting, with a processor a change of the placed position and direction obtained from the input system;

selecting with a processor character information corresponding to the identification information obtained from the input system out of a plurality of character information obtained from the input system out of a plurality of character information, each of which includes image information on a character imitating a figure of the formed object and is associated with the identification information on the formed object;

setting discretionarily, with a processor a size of a movement area correlating with a placement detectable area on the tablet, and setting the movement area in a game space;

controlling with a processor a display position of the character by disposing the character imitating the figure of the formed object in a position in the movement area correlating with the placed position of the formed object in the placement detectable area according to the selected character information, and controlling the character to perform an action according to a predetermined action pattern when the detected change satisfies a predetermined condition; and

generating with a processor an image of the game space including the whole correlating area so that the character is displayed regardless of the size of the movement area and regardless of where in the placement detectable area a player places the formed object,

wherein controlling the character is at least based on a detected amount of change of the gripping strength applied to the formed object, the detection being detected by a pressure sensor.

2. The image generating method as claimed in claim 1, the method further comprising:

determining a direction in the game space correlating with a direction of the formed object obtained from the input system according to a correlating positional relationship of the placement detectable area and the movement area,

wherein controlling the character includes disposing the character at the position in the movement area correlating with the placed position in the determined direction.

4. The image generating method as claimed in claim 1, wherein setting the size of the movement area includes setting the size of the movement area set according to the selected character information.

5. The image generating method as claimed in claim 1, wherein setting the size the movement area includes setting the size of the movement area according to game progress.

6. The image generating method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the formed object comprises a pressure detecting part embedded therein for detecting pressure applied thereto from the outside thereof,

the input system comprises a detecting unit for detecting the pressure detected by the pressure detecting part with predetermined communication,

the method comprising:

obtaining from the input system the pressure detected by the detecting unit; and

controlling motion and movement of the character based on the pressure obtained from the input system.

7. An image generating method performed by an apparatus including a processor, the apparatus connected to an input system, the input system including a tablet using an electromagnetic induction method; and a printed matter, which has a character picture printed on the printing surface thereof, incorporating a coil for performing predetermined communication using an electromagnetic induction method when placed on the tablet, and a memory for storing identification information on the printed matter, so that, when the printed matter is placed on the tablet, the apparatus obtains from the input system a placed position and a direction on the tablet, and identification information on the printed matter, the method comprising:

detecting, with a processor a change of the placed position and the direction obtained from the input system;

selecting, with a processor character information corresponding to the identification information obtained from the input system from a plurality of character information, each of which includes image information on the character printed on the printed matter and is associated with identification information on the printed matter;

setting discretionarily, with a processor a size of movement area correlating with a placement detectable area on the tablet, and setting the movement area in a game space;

controlling, with a processor a display position of the character by disposing the character, printed on the printed matter in the position in the movement area correlating with the placed position of the printed matter in the placement detectable area according to the selected character information, and for controlling the character to perform an action according to a predetermined action pattern when the change detected by the change detecting unit satisfies a predetermined condition; and

generating, with a processor an image of the game space including the whole correlating area so that the character is displayed regardless of the size of the movement area the regardless of where in the placement detectable area a player places the printed matter,

wherein controlling the character is at least based on a detected amount of change of the gripping strength applied to the character printed on the printed matter, the detection being detected by a pressure sensor.

8. The image generating method as claimed in claim 1, wherein

detecting the change includes detecting a turn direction and/or an amount of turn by detecting a change per predetermined unit time for the direction obtained from the input system, and

controlling the character includes controlling the character to perform the action according to the predetermined action pattern when the turn direction and/or the amount of turn satisfy the predetermined condition.

9. The image generating method as claimed in claim 7, wherein

detecting the change includes detecting a turn direction and/or amount of turn by detecting a change per predetermined unit time for the direction obtained from the input system, and

controlling the character includes controlling the character to perform the action according to the predetermined action pattern when the turn direction and/or the amount of turn satisfies the predetermined condition.

10. The image generating method as claimed in claim 1, wherein

detecting the change includes detecting a speed by detecting a change per predetermined unit time for the placed position obtained from the input system, and

controlling the character includes controlling the character to perform the action according to the predetermined action pattern when the speed satisfies the predetermined condition.

11. The image generating method as claimed in claim 7, wherein

detecting the change includes detecting a speed by detecting a change per predetermined unit time for the placed position obtained from the input system, and

controlling the character includes controlling the character to perform the action according to the predetermined action pattern when the speed satisfies the predetermined condition.

12. The image generating method as claimed in claim 1, wherein

detecting the change includes detecting a path by detecting a continuous change

of the placed position obtained from the input system, and

controlling the character includes controlling the character to perform the action

according to the predetermined action pattern when the path satisfies the

predetermined condition.

13. The image generating method as claimed in claim 7, wherein

detecting the change includes detecting a path by detecting a continuous change

of the placed position obtained from the input system, and

controlling the character includes controlling the character to perform the action

according to the predetermined action pattern when the path satisfies the

predetermined condition.

14. The image generating method as claimed in claim 1, using an information storage

medium storing a program for causing an apparatus including a processor to perform

the method, wherein the storage medium being readable by the apparatus.

15. The image generating method as claimed in claim 7, using an information storage

medium storing a program for causing an apparatus including a processor to perform

the method, wherein the storage medium being readable by the apparatus.

16. A game apparatus connected to an input system, the input system comprising:

a tablet using an electromagnetic induction method; and

a formed object incorporating a coil for performing predetermined communication with the tablet using an electromagnetic induction method when placed on the tablet, and a memory for storing identification information on the formed object,

so that the apparatus obtains from the input system a placed position and a direction on the tablet, and identification information on the formed object when the formed object is placed on the tablet,

the apparatus comprising:

a change detecting unit for detecting a change of the placed position and the direction obtained from the input system;

a selecting unit for selecting character information corresponding to the identification information obtained from the input system out of a plurality of character information, each of which includes image information on a character imitating a figure of the formed object and is associated with the identification information on the formed object;

a correlating area setting unit for setting discretionarily a size of a movement area correlating with a placement detectable area on the tablet, and setting the movement area in a game space;

a character control unit for controlling a display position of the character by disposing the character imitating the figure of the formed object in the position in the

movement area correlating with the placed position of the formed object in placement

detectable area according to the character information selected by the selecting unit,

and for controlling the character to perform an action according to a predetermined

action pattern when the change detected by the change detecting unit satisfies a

predetermined condition; and

an image generating unit for generating an image of the game space including

the whole correlating area so that the character is displayed regardless of the size of the

movement area and regardless of where in the placement detectable area a player

places the formed object,

wherein the image generation unit controls the character at least based on a

detected amount of change of the gripping strength applied to the formed object, the

detection being detected by a pressure sensor.

17. A game apparatus connected to an input system, the input system comprising:

a tablet using an electromagnetic induction method; and

a printed matter, which has a character picture on a printing surface thereof,

incorporating a coil for performing predetermined communication using an

electromagnetic induction method when placed on the tablet, and a memory for storing

identification information on the printed matter,

so that the apparatus obtains from the input system a placed position and a

direction on the tablet, and identification information on the printed matter when the

printed matter is placed on the tablet,

the apparatus comprising:

a change detecting unit for detecting a change of the placed position and the direction obtained from the input system;

a selecting unit for selecting character information corresponding to the identification information obtained from the input system out of a plurality of character information, each of which includes image information on a character printed on the printed matter and is associated with the identification information on the printed matter;

a correlating area setting unit for setting discretionarily a size of a movement area correlating with a placement detectable area on the tablet, and setting a position of the movement area in a game space;

a selecting unit for selecting character information corresponding to the identification information obtained from the input system out of a plurality of character information, each of which includes image information on a character printed on the printed matter and is associated with the identification information on the printed matter;

a correlating area setting unit for setting discretionarily a size of a movement area correlating with a placement detectable area on the tablet, and setting a position of the movement area in a game space;

a character control unit for controlling a display position of the character by disposing the character printed on the printed matter in the pin the position in the movement area correlating with the placed position of the printed matter in the placement detectable area according to the character information selected by the selecting unit, and for controlling the character to perform an action according to a

predetermined action pattern when the change detected by the change detecting unit

satisfies a predetermined condition; and

an image generating unit for generating an image of the game space including

the whole correlating area so that the character is displayed regardless of the size of the

movement area and regardless of where in the placement detectable area a player

places the printed matter.

20. The image generating method as claimed in claim 1, wherein

the predetermined action patterns of the character differ depending on a

predetermined threshold distance between the character being controlled in the game

space

21. The image generating method as claimed in claim 7, wherein

the predetermined action patterns of the character differ depending on a

predetermined threshold distance between the character being controlled in the game

space and enemy objects in the game space.

The abstract should now be replaced by the following:

Game information is provided that includes a table, a formed object incorporating a coil

and a memory for storing identification information on the formed object. When a formed

object is placed on the tablet, the apparatus obtains from the input system a placed

position and direction on the tablet, and identification information on the formed object.
The apparatus can detect a change of the placed position and the direction obtained
from the input system, select character information corresponding to the identification
information, dispose the character in a game space, control motion and movement of
the character according to the change detected, and generate an image in the game
space including the character controlled by the character control unit.

Reasons for Allowance

1.   The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The prior art
does not teach the use of grip strength sensors on game pieces that interact with a
displayed game environment. For example, Gilboa (U.S. Patent No. 5,853,327)
discloses character pieces with position sensors that interact with other characters on a
display, but Gilboa does not disclose pressure sensors on the character pieces.

        Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later
than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably
accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on
Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

        Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the
examiner should be directed to REGINALD A. RENWICK whose telephone number is

(571)270-1913. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 7:30AM-

5:00PM, Alt Fridays, EST.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's

supervisor, Dmitry Suhol can be reached on 571-272-4430. The fax phone number for

the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the

Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for

published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR.

Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only.

For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should

you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic

Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a

USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information

system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Dmitry Suhol/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art
Unit 3714

/R. A. R./
Examiner, Art Unit 3714